

A threefold Alphabet of Rules, concerning Christian-Practice: The first Precept of each Letter concerning our Duty towards God, the second towards our Neighbour, the third towards our selves.

12 March. 1688

A.

1. **A** Wake with God in the Morning, and before all things, give him the first Fruits and Calves of your Lips. First in confessing of sins: Secondly in Petitioning of necessities for Body and Soul: Thirdly, in thankfulness for Mercies received, especially your late preservation, rest and protection of you and yours. *Josh. 24. 15. Psal. 101. 2.*

2. Account it not enough that your self fear God, unless you see all in your charge do the same. *Gen. 14. 14. and 18, 19.*

3. Arm your self against whatsoever the day may bring forth, and upon all occasions think upon your happy Redemption, with much thankfulness for so happy a Conjunction of Justice and Mercy.

B.

1. Beware of occasions of Sin, and wisely inure your self in subduing the least sin, that at least the greater may be foiled. *1 Sam. 10. 16.*

2. Believe all that God hath spoken unto you out of his Word, but not all that Man telleth you, nor tell to another all that you hear, but only the Truth, and that neither all, nor always. *Ecc. 3. 7. Luke 2. 29.*

3. Before you take in hand any thing, Counsel with Gods word if it be lawful, and then perform it with Prayer, that it may be as successful as lawful.

C.

1. Carefully set your self in Gods presence all the day long.

2. Carry your self unto all, as that the weak may be wonned, the strong comforted and the wicked ashamed. *1 Cor. 10. 32. Col. 4. 5.*

3. Consider the dignity of your Soul, how beautiful it is to God and his Angels, so long as you keep it unspotted, that so you may cleanse your heart from the first motions of sinful thoughts, as Lust, Anger, Envy, Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, Sullenness, and the rather because the least Sin deserveth Death. *Mat. 15. 18. Eph. 4. 23. 31. Col. 3. 5. 8.*

D.

1. Daily, Morning and Evening at least, solemnly on your knees make Confession and requests with thanksgiving unto the Lord: In the Morning think that that day may be your last day: and when you go to bed you know not whether you shall rise again, unless it be to Judgment: It is safest therefore to use Prayer, as a Key to open the Morning, and as a Bar or Lock to shut in the Evening.

2. Delight to do all the good to, and receive all the good you can from, Gods Children. *Gal. 6. 10.*

3. Distrust not Gods Providence in any lawful undertaking, although you see the means wanting, neither when you have them let them be relied on more than God himself, but let him be pray'd unto for the prosperous use of them. *1 Chron. 16. 9. 12. 1 Cor. 3. 5. and 3. 7.*

E.

1. Exercise your mind in meditating often on the works of God, as his Creating and Governing of the World, his prospering and punishing the wicked, his blessing and correcting of his Children, his preparing unspeakable Joys for the one, and unutterable torments for the other. But especially on the Sabbath, add to these Meditations the Holy exercise of Prayer, Preaching, holy conferences and the like. *Jer. 12. 2. Hab. 2. 1. 2. Mat. 15. 31. Exod. 20. 8.*

2. Esteem of every one better than your self, and the more you excel another, be so much the more humble.

3. Examine your Thoughts well whether they tend, before you fulfil your own Desires, if you find them unprofitable, curious, vain, or such as you cannot yield a sufficient reason to God or man for, kill them in the Shell, let them not live or breath in you any longer. *Rom. 12. 16. Phil. 2. 3. Rom. 14. 23. Prov. 6. 14. Zach. 8. 17. Ps. 49. 3.*

F.

1. Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man. *Ecc. 12. 13.*

2. Fly and avoid places and persons Infectious, Wanton, Idle, unthrifty, and bad Company which are to the Soul as poisoned and infected Air to the Body. *Prov. 5. 8. and 6. 17. 18.*

3. Follow with faithfulness and diligence your own business in the lawful and peculiar Calling wherein God hath placed you, only be careful in your Earthly business to carry a Heavenly mind. *Ecc. 1. 13. Gen. 3. 19. 2 Thes. 3. 6.*

G.

1. Grow up daily in the practice of every Commandment, and in the Faith of every promise of God, seeing God would have those that are planted in his House thrive, and be fruitful in their old Age. He that is not best at last, may fear whether ever he were good. *1 Cor. 10. 32.*

2. Give no offence to any man, whether within or without, for we be to them by whom offences come. *Rom. 14. 13.*

3. Grieve for nothing in the world so much as for your own sins, and in them, for nothing so much as in offending so loving a God, and that not only in committing of evil but in omitting of good. *Rom. 7. 8.*

H.

1. Humble your self for your sins that the Lord may raise you up, for he that judgeth himself aright, shall never be judged of the Lord. *1 Cor. 11. 31.*

2. Honour all men in their places, but no man so much for his greatness as for his goodness, and thus shall you imitate the Lord himself who accepteth not persons but in every Nation accepteth him that feareth him. *Acts 10. 31.*

3. Have special care to avoid the sins which you have found your self most inclined unto, and which hath in times past prevailed, for sin is loth to be said nay.

I.

1. Justify Gods wisdom in all his proceedings concerning your self and others, his Power in sustaining, his Providence in maintaining, his Justice in punishing, his Love for correcting, his Bounty in promising, his Faithfulness in performing, his Grace in giving, his Mercy in taking away, and in every thing say from thy Heart blessed be the Name of the Lord.

2. In every Company do some good and receive some also, give no cause to be ill spoken of, neither do any hurt by Speech, Silence, Countenance, or Example; but in your praises be discreet, in admonishing brotherly, and wise in moving and holding up profitable Discourse or Conference.

3. It is fearful to sin, but much more to lie in it, therefore register all your sins daily, bewail them, pray for Pardon of them, and strength against them, condemn no sin by counting it little, because Gods Law hath condemned it, and Christ hath died for it. *Psal. 51. 3. Eph. 4. 26.*

K.

1. Know God in Christ, which is Life everlasting, Kiss ye the Son of God, lest he be angry, and know your self to be a Believer, and that Christ is in you, and you in him. *Job 17. 3. Psal. 2. 12.*

2. Keep as your Vows with God, so your lawful promises with men, for Faith and Truth must kiss each other in Christian Conversation. *Psal. 15. 4.*

3. Keep out wandering and worldly thoughts, and unclean thoughts, as much as possible, narrowly watching your heart, for such as you suffer that to be, such will be your words, deeds, and conversation. *Prov. 4. 23.*

L.

1. Love all things for Gods sake, and God only for his own; and look you make him your Friend, whosoever be your Enemy for it, this you should do, if as an obedi-

ent Child you live in the Eye of your Heavenly Father.

2. Look on the Lives of the Wicked to avoid them, of the Godly to imitate them, upon the Life and Death of them both, as also your own not far off, to make you loath this world and long after the Life to come. *Luke 21. 34.*

3. Let your Meat, Apparel, and Recreation be Lawful, needful and moderate. *Rom. 13. 13.*

M.

1. Make no mention of God, or any word or work of his, but with Fear and Reverence, nor of any Man but with Love, and carefulness, using his Name as you would have him to use yours. *Deut. 28. 58. Mar. 7. 12.*

2. Mark other mens profitting in Religion to provoke your self, their steps to make your self more wary, their rising to be thankful to God for them.

3. Meditate often on the four last things Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell.

N.

1. Never make more show of Knowledge outwardly then inwardly you have in your heart, which God seeth, in which he desireth Truth, nor please your self with your unprofitableness, unfitness, unwillingness to good. *Rom. 12. 21.*

2. No man is owner but Steward of that which he hath; you must therefore impart of the Blessings you have, to those that stand in need; wisely, heartily, and in due season.

3. Note your own special corruptions, whether they grow stronger or weaker, and how your self can resist them, and if any assault you more strongly, pray, and make the matter known to God, who hath said sin shall not have Dominion over you. *1 Cor. 11. 28. Rom. 6. 14.*

O.

1. Often speak to the praise of God, never of your self, because many words want not sin, speak as few as you can, or rather none, then unprofitable. *Prov. 17. 27. & 10. 19.*

2. Open not your Mouth to speak of other mens Infirmities, especially behind them, nor before them without grief and sorrow. *Jam. 1. 19. Psal. 15. 3.*

3. Of every idle word account must be given, and much more of every wicked word, and therefore let your Speech tend to edification. *2 Tim. 2. 3. Mat. 18. 11. & 12. 36.*

P.

1. praise the Lord for every new Benefit bestowed, and then by it promote his Glory, the Churches good, and your own Salvation; esteeming of Graces given as spurs to Godliness, and pledges of eternal Life. *1 Thes. 5. 18.*

2. Prevent anger before it kindle, its wisdom to quench the first spark of Fire before it begin to flame. Consider first the Original of Anger, being Pride or self-love, secondly, the cursed Fruits, by giving place to the Devil; thirdly Gods patience, fourthly Gods Image in your Brother, fifthly your own weakness in the same kind, sixthly, the wrong is not remedied by Revenge, but enlarged, nor the wrong doer, amended but imitated. *Ecc. 7. 11. Prov. 14. 17.*

3. Prepare your self for Death, and pull out his sting, by first bewailing sins past. Secondly by turning to God in time to come. Thirdly by purposing a new Life. None can die ill, that hath care to live well. Perswade your self if you live well, you shall do well; but if you die well, doubt not but you shall do better. *1 Cor. 15. 16.*

Q.

1. Quiet your heart and be still under the correcting hand of God: because 1. He doth it. 2. For the best. 3. He will moderate it. 4. Supply strength. 5. Seasonably deliver out of it, *Psal. 39. 9.*

2. Question not whether others should do you good, or you them first; it is praise worthy to be first in well doing, and if you do good to your Enemies your reward is with God, *Mat. 5. 36. Rom. 12. 20.*

3. Quench not the Spirit, nor suffer any godly motion arising in your heart to pass away but feed it by Reading, Meditation, Prayer, and Practice, *1 Thes. 5. 19.*

R.

1. Read something daily of Gods word for the increase of Knowledge, and add unto Meditation and Prayer, for all time thus spent is well redeemed, *Psal. 12. Deut. 6. 6.*

2. Rejoyce in the good you know by any other, praise God for it, pray for the increase of it, but if you know any evil by any, mourn for it, and if you can by Brotherly love and admonition amend it.

3. Reform your Ears, Eyes, Mouth, and Hands, from hearing, seeing, speaking or performing, any wicked and vain thing, knowing that die you must but how soon you know not, *Job 31. 1. Ps. 119. 37.*

S.

1. Stick to God as well in adversity as in prosperity: if you want necessities humble your self for them, if you have them be humble with them, and use them well lest you forfeit them, *James 2. 2.*

2. Seek reconciliation with your Neighbour, freely forgive those that have offended you, and desire earnestly to be forgiven of all that have been offended by you. *Mat. 5. 23. Ps. 35. 14.*

3. Study to approve both your heart to God, and your life to Gods Children in your particular callings, and especially to such as to whom God hath joynd you, if as a Servant in obeying, if a Master in Ruling, if an Husband in loving, if a Wife in reverencing, *Mar. 23. 26. Jer. 7. 9. Eph. 5. 35. & 6. 5. 6.*

T.

1. Take heed of performing Holy duties for fashion's sake, without feeling profit, for this is Hypocrisy, *Heb. 3. 22.*

2. Thankfully requite the good you get by any Man, either 1st. by acknowledgment. Or 2. by hearty affection. Or, 3. by Prayer, *Isa. 1. 11. Mat. 5. 8.*

3. Think it the greatest work in the World to die well, because its a thing that must but once be done, and if not well done then thou art for ever undone: to die well you must inure your self to it before hand. 1. by dying to sin. 2. leaving the World in affection, before it actually leaveth you. 3. in your last leaving of it, do it willingly, joyfully wheresoever, whensoever or howsoever God shall call you, *Rom. 12. 6. & 1. 12.*

V.

1. Vow to God and keep it, especially strive in performing the solemn Vow of your Baptism, and the Covenant which you renew at the Lords Supper. *Ecc. 5. 34. Ps. 116. 14.*

2. Variance and discord with Men will not stand with your Peace with God, if you love God you will love Men also for Gods Image or else for his Commandments sake. *Job. 1. 4. 20.*

3. Use the world as not using it; That is not gained which is got with the loss of the Soul. What will you pamper and prepare for your Body, that piece of dirt, and neglect your immortal Soul, which must ever live either in endless Joy or in an unquenchable Fire? Oh horrible Folly! *1 Cor. 7. 31. Mat. 16. 26.*

W.

1. Wait upon the Lord and he will direct your way, become his Servant for this is the way to attain your surest liberty. *Pf. 37. 34.*

2. Weep with them that weep, and fellow-feel the afflictions of the Bretheren in the World; Christ in Heaven accounteth the suffering of his Saints his own, and we his Members on Earth must do the same. Religion and Mercy are well matcht by God, and by Man must not be divorced. *Pf. 69. 9. Ezek. 9. 4. Jer. 13. 17.*

3. Wish not a long life, so much as a good life: he hath lived long who hath lived well. A short life in Grace setteth into the Everlasting life of Glory.

Sit Deo laus in secula seculorum. Amen.

N. N.

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